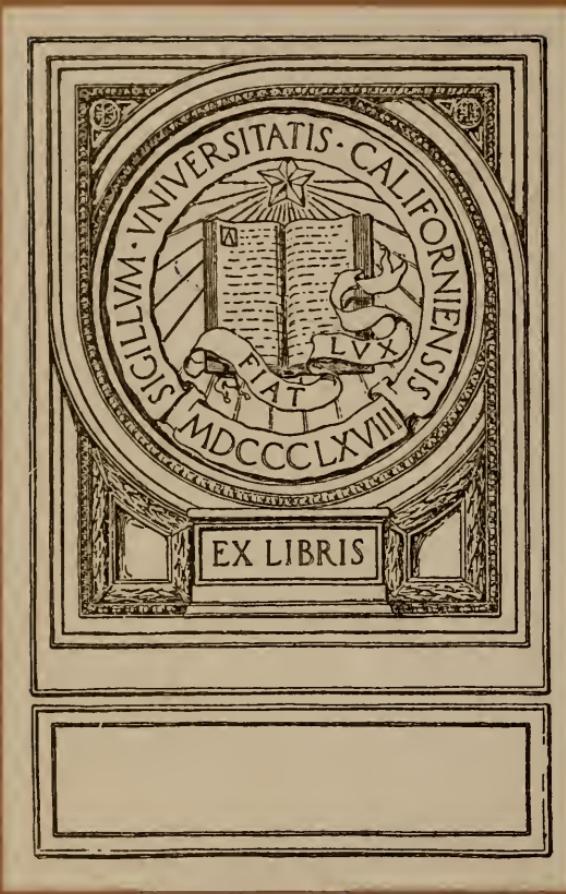


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THE MONROE DOCTRINE
Its Origin, Development and Recent
Interpretation

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THE MONROE DOCTRINE

ITS ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT, AND RECENT INTERPRETATION

I

The greater part of American foreign policy during the past century may be summed up in two phrases: "isolation from the international politics of Europe" and "America for the Americans". These two ideas, gradually developed during the half century after the Declaration of Independence, were given complete recognition in the annual presidential message of 1823. They are known to the world as "The Monroe Doctrine", though the policy which they embody would have evolved just the same had James Monroe and his Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, never lived. Because this distinctive international system, so different from the European balance of power, has become thoroughly identified with the development of our nation, and has been mentioned, amplified, interpreted, and used as a justification for prospective action by American statesmen of all parties, it may be safely called the most enduring, and in fact the only great non-partisan feature of American foreign policy.

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In looking for the origin of the Monroe Doctrine, one has to go back to the Continental Congress in 1776, when Benjamin Franklin opposed as poor policy the sending of American agents to seek foreign alliances. He was overruled, and even became one of the agents to conclude the alliance with France in 1778, the first, last, and only offensive and defensive alliance between the United States and a foreign power. The writings of American statesmen during the few years following that event show that occasionally they had a glimpse of the trend American foreign policy was to take. It remained for George Washington to voice this policy so lucidly and succinctly that

it might well be called the "Washington Doctrine". In his farewell address to the American people in 1796 he used the following words:

"The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

"Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote relation. Hence, she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise for us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.

"Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. . . .

"It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world,

"Taking care always to keep ourselves by suitable establishments on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies."¹

Four years after Washington's retirement, Thomas Jefferson was delivering his first inaugural address. In it he laid down as the essential guiding principle in our foreign affairs, "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none."²

During the next few years similar statements were repeated from time to time by Jefferson, and also by his successors, Madison and Monroe. This developing policy of voluntary exclusion from the affairs of Europe, during the first three decades of our national existence, had as its cause and justification the self-protection of the young republic.

In these statements just quoted, the position was taken that the United States might have peace and commerce without entangling alliances, that if she left Europe alone the frequent Old World controversies would not extend to American

1. Richardson, "Messages and Papers of the Presidents," Vol. I, p. 222.

2. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 323.

shores. After the War of 1812 new international conditions arose which demonstrated that this was not necessarily true, and which, therefore, induced the addition of the prohibitive element as applied to Europe, the exclusion of European political influence from the American continent. This is one of the most obvious features of American foreign policy to-day, the one uppermost in the public mind. It is important to know the conditions which gave rise to it.



Owing to internal disturbances and the collapse of authority in Spain during the Napoleonic Wars, the Spanish-American colonies were left almost totally in control of their own affairs. Upon the return of the Spanish Bourbons to power, and the attempt to re-establish royal authority over Spanish-America, the colonies refused to return to the old order. Spain, king-ridden and poverty-stricken, could make no headway against rebellion. One after another of her colonies became independent, and established, at least in form, republican governments.

The American people, thinking they saw in the struggle in Latin-America the old battle against European absolutism, were delighted with every success and were especially pleased that the form of the new governments should be modeled after their own. The American government, however, under the lead of the keen Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, followed the policy initiated by Washington in 1793 in maintaining a strict neutrality. It resisted the pressure to recognize the independence of the new republics until after a treaty with Spain was secured by which Florida was acquired, the boundary line between Mexico and the United States delimited, and a claim to the Pacific Coast region north of the 42nd parallel established. Then, and not until then, was recognition accorded.

In the meantime events in Europe were shaping themselves in such a way as to cause uneasiness in America. Under the treaties of 1815, the Quadruple Alliance, comprising the allies which had crushed Napoleon, guaranteed to each of

the lesser states of Europe its territory. The more reactionary European statesmen construed this to mean the maintenance of the existing status of absolute rule, against the new liberal and democratic ideas. Through the influence of Prince Metternich of Austria and Czar Alexander of Russia, the great powers interposed to crush popular uprisings in Italy in 1821 and in Spain in 1823. As to the attitude to be taken toward insurrections in the colonies of European nations, the members of the Alliance were undecided among themselves. It is probable that they could have agreed upon no definite program. Nevertheless, fears were entertained in the United States that the European powers would turn next to Latin-America, conquer the rebellious Spanish colonies, and for the assistance rendered to Spain secure rewards for themselves in the shape of American colonial possessions.³

There was, in addition to this possibility of trouble in the South, a threat to the United States in the Northwest. The Czar had large possessions at that time in the northwestern part of North America. He was, moreover, steadily pushing his claims southward along the Pacific Coast. In 1821 he issued a ukase by which that whole region as far south as the 51st parallel was reserved exclusively for his own subjects. Foreigners were forbidden to approach within one hundred miles of the coast or adjacent islands, on pain of confiscation of ship and cargo.⁴

These two dangers apparently threatening the United States meant, first, the end of American expansion westward by Russian expansion southward; and second, the substitution of European absolutism for republican government in Latin-America, entailing the extension of the European system of

3. American writers on the Monroe Doctrine have generally confused the Quadruple Alliance with the "Holy Alliance". The latter was an impractical personal league, a "sonorous nothing" to use Metternich's words, having as its avowed object the administration of governmental affairs according to the principles of justice, charity, and peace. Contrary to the prevalent American opinion at that time and since, the dispatch of Austrian and French armies into Italy and Spain was not the work of the Holy Alliance.

4. U. S. Foreign Relations, 1890, p. 439.

policies, internal and international, to our southern borders. Secretary Adams vigorously combated the Russian claims, and later, in 1824, secured a favorable treaty as to the Northwest.⁵ But in view of the adoption in Europe of the policy of intervention in the internal affairs of nations, the time clearly had come for the United States to promulgate the corollary of its policy of non-interference in European affairs, namely, the non-interference of Europe in American affairs.

III

President Monroe was encouraged in this purpose by advice received from Jefferson, who wrote from Monticello that this was the most momentous question since that of Independence. "Our first and fundamental maxim should be", declared Jefferson, "never to entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe. Our second, never to suffer Europe to intermeddle with cis-Atlantic affairs."⁶ The attitude of England also encouraged the United States, for reconquest of South America would have disturbed English commerce as well as done violence to her growing liberalism. George Canning, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, went so far as to propose a joint declaration by England and the United States against any project for the subjugation of the Spanish-American republics. Monroe was disposed to accept the English invitation, but Adams favored an independent utterance, "rather than to come in", he said, "as a cock-boat in the wake of the British man-of-war."⁷ His desire prevailed, and through the medium of the President's annual message in December, 1823, the American policy was proclaimed to the world.

In this message the American policy of aloofness from the internal affairs of Europe, advised by Washington, was reiterated in the following words: "Our policy in regard to Europe, which was adopted at an early stage of the wars which have so long agitated that quarter of the globe, nevertheless remains the same, which is, not to interfere in the internal

5. Malloy, W. M., "Treaties, Conventions, etc.", p. 1512.

6. "Writings of Jefferson," Vol. X, p. 277.

7. Adams, J. Q., "Memoirs," Vol. VI, p. 179.

concerns of any of its powers; to consider the government *de facto* as the legitimate government for us; to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve those relations by a frank, firm, and manly policy, meeting in all instances the just claims of every power, submitting to injuries from none." ⁸

Against Russian expansion in the Northwest, the message asserted "as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers."

To meet the challenge of European intervention, the new danger threatening America, the specific declaration of the expansion of the previous policy of the United States was made as follows: "We owe it, therefore, to candor, and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers, to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the governments who have declared their independence, and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.

"It is impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of either continent without endangering our peace and happiness: . . . It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition in any form with indifference." ⁹

Thus the American international system was stated in classic form. Summarizing, it repeated our intention to leave the internal affairs of Europe alone, it served notice that

8. Richardson, Vol. II, p. 207 et seq.

9. Ibid.

America was closed to future colonization, and it erected a barrier against the oppression of Latin-American countries by European powers. After 1823 this policy was almost invariably spoken of as the Monroe Doctrine. It is not altogether a misnomer, but one must bear in mind that while the phrases of Monroe were coined to meet certain specific conditions which have passed away, those phrases also declared a general principle for the future. The ideas announced in the message of 1823 were permanently valuable and with passing time have increased in value. Were this not true the Monroe Doctrine would have lost all significance with the disappearance by 1830 of the Metternich system of intervention.

IV

It is not the intention in this study to register every case in which the Doctrine has figured since 1823. Upon a few occasions, however, interpretations have been given which seemed to widen its scope, and these should be noted in order to understand its present status.

For a number of years after the publication of Monroe's message, American foreign policy occupied little attention. But in President Polk's administration, 1845 to 1849, one of the great expansion periods of American history, came two statements of importance from the White House. First, in the President's annual message of 1845, referring to the dispute between this country and Great Britain over the Oregon territory, and to the possible intervention of European powers as a result of our annexation of Texas, he said, "In the existing circumstances of the world, the present is deemed a proper occasion to reiterate and reaffirm the principle avowed by Mr. Monroe, . . . it should be distinctly announced to the world as our settled policy that no future European colony or dominion shall, with our consent be planted or established on any part of the North American continent."¹⁰ Polk seemed to limit the application of the Monroe Doctrine to North America. But in using the word "dominion" he used a term

10. Richardson, Vol. IV, p. 399.

which includes the acquisition of territory by voluntary transfer as well as by conquest of colonies already established. In the later interpretation of the policy, the limited area idea (*North America*) was rejected, but the enlarged scope idea as represented by the word "dominion" was retained.

President Polk's second statement appeared in 1848 in a special message to Congress relative to the Yucatan peninsula, practically independent at that time from Mexico. Because of inability to cope with Indian insurrections there, its authorities had appealed to Polk for aid and had offered to transfer the "dominion and sovereignty" of the peninsula to the United States. Similar appeals were sent to Great Britain and Spain. In his message dealing with the situation, the President declined to recommend the annexation of Yucatan, but on the other hand declared that according to our established policy "we could not consent to a transfer of this 'dominion and sovereignty' to either Spain, Great Britain, or any other European power."¹¹ This emphasized the point made in the first message forbidding European acquisition of American territories by voluntary transfer or cession, and it also broadened the interpretation. The first message forbade the transfer of American colonial possessions from one European power to another; this one prohibited independent American governments from transferring their territory to European powers.

The most glaring violation of the principles of the Monroe Doctrine occurred during the American Civil War, when France sent an army into Mexico, overthrew the Republic and established a monarchy. After long negotiations, in which neither the name of Monroe nor the phrase "Monroe Doctrine" were ever mentioned, though the traditional American policy was carefully defined, the French withdrew. The withdrawal did not occur, however, until a veteran American army had been massed on the Texas border.

Nearly thirty years later came the boundary dispute between Venezuela and Great Britain, a question over which the United States and Great Britain came to the verge of

11. Richardson, Vol. IV, p. 581.

war. This dispute was nearly a century old, but it reached an acute stage at this time because Venezuela broke off diplomatic relations with England, and it involved the United States when Venezuela appealed to this government for support. Early in 1895 the United States proposed that the matter be left to friendly arbitration. Venezuela was willing to accept, but Lord Salisbury, then English Prime Minister, was so dilatory in his reply that Secretary of State Olney categorically inquired whether the British government would submit the whole controversy to arbitration. This dispatch was the first in our history in which the Monroe Doctrine was advanced in a written communication to a foreign government as justification for an intended course of action. Olney declared that the Monroe Doctrine did not establish a protectorate over other American states; that it did not relieve any of them from "obligations as fixed by international law nor prevent any European power directly interested from enforcing such obligations or from inflicting merited punishment for the breach of them", but that its "single purpose and object" was that "no European power or combination of powers" should "forcibly deprive an American state of the right and power of self-government, and of shaping for itself its own political fortunes and destinies." This principle he conceived to be at stake in the dispute between Great Britain and Venezuela because, as the dispute related to territory it necessarily meant "political control to be lost by one party and gained by the other." "Today," Mr. Olney declared, "the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition." All the advantages of this superiority were at once imperilled, he affirmed, if the principle that European powers might convert American states into colonies or provinces of their own were admitted. Among the disastrous consequences to the United States of such a condition of things, the loss of prestige, of authority, and of weight in the councils of the nations would be the least. "Our only real rivals in peace as well as enemies in war would be found located at our very doors."¹²

12. "Foreign Relations," 1895, Part I, p. 545.

Lord Salisbury, in his reply, claimed that the United States was insisting upon a new and strange extension and development of the Monroe Doctrine. He declared also that the reasons justifying an appeal to the Doctrine in 1823 were no longer in force. He refused, therefore, to submit the dispute to arbitration.¹³

Congress being in session at the time, President Cleveland laid the whole correspondence before it, accompanied by a special message containing definite statements as a reply to Lord Salisbury. ". . . the doctrine upon which we stand is strong and sound," said the message, "because its enforcement is important to our peace and safety as a nation, and is essential to the integrity of our free institutions and the tranquil maintenance of our distinctive form of government. It was intended to apply to every stage of our national life, and cannot become obsolete while our Republic endures."

"If a European power, by an extension of its boundaries, takes possession of the territory of one of our neighboring Republics against its will and in derogation of its rights, it is difficult to see why to that extent such European power does not thereby attempt to extend its system of government to that portion of this continent which is thus taken. This is the precise action which President Monroe declared to be 'dangerous to our peace and safety,' and it can make no difference whether the European system is extended by an advance of frontier or otherwise."¹⁴

Upon the President's recommendation, provision was made for a specific American commission to investigate the boundary question, but before it could report Great Britain and Venezuela had signed an arbitration treaty under which the boundary was settled. Great Britain was finally awarded most of the territory in dispute, though it is probably safe to say that Venezuela fared better than would have been the case had not the United States interfered. The most important results of the Venezuelan incident, according to John Bassett Moore, were the

13. *Ibid.*, p. 563.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 542.

official adoption of the Monroe Doctrine by Congress, and its explicit acceptance by the principal maritime power of Europe.¹⁵ English writers deny the latter, though they admit it was a bad precedent for England.¹⁶

V

With the year 1898 a new period in the interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine began. The American public has not at all appreciated that the diplomatic significance to the United States of the Spanish-American war was out of all proportion to its military or naval significance. As a result of that war Porto Rico and the Philippines were annexed, a substantial protectorate was established over Cuba, and American interest in an Isthmian canal was aroused to such an extent that its construction was inevitable. All of these questions intimately affected the status of the Monroe Doctrine. Since 1898, therefore, American diplomacy has had the task of adjusting the great guiding principles of American foreign policy, laid down in our early history, to these new situations. Corollaries of the old principles have been developed and practical applications made to meet new conditions. In this recent interpretation the most prominent figures have been John Hay, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson.

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John Hay, who went into the State Department in 1898, once declared that the briefest expression of American foreign policy was "the Monroe Doctrine and the Golden Rule."¹⁷ He did not claim to monopolize for the United States the latter, but of the former at least he was a recognized guardian. One of his first problems was the removal of the diplomatic obstacles in the way of building a canal, obstacles represented chiefly by the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850. That treaty, a marked exception to the established tradition that the United States would enter into no agreement with European states

15. Harper's Magazine, "Non-Interference and the Monroe Doctrine," Vol. 109, p. 867.

16. For example, H. B. Leech, "The Monroe Doctrine," in the Fortnightly Review, Vol. 78, p. 850.

17. Outlook, Vol. 69, p. 795.

concerning purely American affairs, provided for the complete neutralization of the proposed canal, with no fortifications by either power. The treaty has usually been regarded in this country as a case in which the English ambassador out-generaled the American Secretary, for while it lasted it effectually prevented the construction of any canal at all. Negotiations for its formal abrogation were begun in 1881, and after twenty years of what an English writer has styled "diplomatic persecution,"¹⁸ were brought to a successful termination by the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty in 1901.¹⁹ This gave to the United States every right that it had ever asked in regard to a canal. It must be apparent to everyone that since the cutting of the Isthmus, our interest in the maintenance of the Monroe Doctrine in the Caribbean countries has immeasurably increased. The West Indies have become a highway to the Pacific, instead of a blind alley.²⁰

During the last four years of his administration of the State Department, 1901-1905, Secretary Hay was confronted with other problems in connection with the Caribbean countries and the Isthmus, demanding close attention and careful thought. In working out these problems, he had the entire confidence and approval of his chief, Theodore Roosevelt. Though naturally the two may have disagreed as to some minor details of procedure, they were evidently in full accord as to the general policies to be pursued.

President Roosevelt during his administration earned the reputation of being even more ardent than Mr. Hay in his attachment to the Monroe Doctrine. In his grasp of its fundamental importance and meaning, and his appreciation of the momentous consequences of its various interpretations, few American statesmen have equalled him. In foreign countries he was regarded as its most uncompromising champion. This reputation is probably deserved, as no other public man in America has discussed so frequently and so fully the scope and character of the Monroe Doctrine.

18. H. B. Leech, in *Fortnightly Review*, Vol. 78, p. 845.

19. Malloy, Vol. I, p. 782.

20. "American Foreign Policy," by a Diplomatist, p. 82.

Prior to President Roosevelt's administration, the United States had not opposed the temporary occupation of the sea-ports of Latin-American republics for redress on account of torts, insults to flags for instance, or to the ambassador of a foreign country or injuries to its citizens. Thus, in 1895, after several British subjects had been banished from Nicaragua without trial and even with no charges preferred against them, the United States had not objected to the British occupation of the port of Corinto. It was, however, definitely understood that this occupation was to be temporary in character, to be continued only until satisfactory guarantees for the payment of damages had been given.²¹ President Roosevelt dealt with this phase of international relations in his first annual message, December, 1901, when he said, "We do not guarantee any state against punishment if it misconducts itself, provided that punishment does not take the form of acquisition of territory by any non-American power."²²

The problem however as to what the United States would do in case of the occupation of Latin-American sea-ports to compel, by the confiscation of the customs revenues, the payment of debts arising out of contract, had not arisen before this time. Such a case appeared shortly after this first presidential message. Germany and England, afterwards joined by Italy, finding diplomacy inadequate in collecting claims against Venezuela, planned to blockade her ports and seize her custom-houses. A year before this forcible collection was undertaken, and while negotiations were still pending, the German ambassador to the United States tacitly recognized American interest in the problem by sending an official explanation of the proposed action to our government. This communication included the following definite statement: "We declare especially that under no circumstances do we consider in our proceedings the acquisition or the permanent occupation of Venezuelan territory."²³ As if to make this statement even more emphatic, Secretary Hay in his acknowledgement of the re-

21. "Foreign Relations," 1895, Part I, p. 697.

22. Ibid., 1901, p. xxxvi.

23. "Foreign Relations," 1901, p. 194.

ceipt of the note, repeated the identical words used by the German ambassador.

With this assurance our government appeared to be satisfied. In his second annual message, December 2, 1902, President Roosevelt referred to the subject indirectly when he said that no independent nation, maintaining order within its borders and discharging its just obligations to foreigners, had anything to dread from outside interference. By declaring that "all civilized and orderly powers" should "insist on the proper policing of the world," he even seemed to tacitly approve the proposed blockade and punishment of Venezuela.²⁴ Shortly afterward, December 10, 1902, the blockade of the Venezuelan coast began. It lasted only until the middle of the following February, for through the good offices of Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Bowen, American Ambassador to Venezuela, a compromise satisfactory to all parties was arranged.²⁵

24. *Ibid.*, 1902, p. xxl.

25. This compromise included an arrangement whereby Venezuela agreed to lay aside for payment to her creditors 30 per cent. of the customs revenue collected at her two chief ports. As this arrangement did not distinguish between the blockading powers and non-blockading powers with equally valid claims against Venezuela, the question as to whether the former should have preferential treatment was referred to the Hague Tribunal. According to its decision, rendered February 22, 1904, the claims of the blockading powers were to be paid first. American writers pointed out that this decision placed a premium upon interference by European creditor nations with the poorly managed American republics, for the nation which so interfered first would have its claims paid first. The decision also placed upon each party to the litigation its own costs and an equal share of the costs of the tribunal, and charged the United States with the execution of this part of the decision. This was misunderstood by some American writers, who thought the United States had been made the executor for the European nations of a judgment against Venezuela, and that the court had thus given a "valuable recognition of the Monroe Doctrine." (*Review of Reviews*, Vol. 29, p. 402.) As a matter of fact Secretary Hay afterwards limited the action of the United States to the payment of its own costs and its share of the costs of the tribunal. (See Sen. Doc. 119, 58th Cong., 3rd ses., "The Venezuelan Arbitration before the Hague Tribunal." The award is on pp. 106-110, and Secretary Hay's action on p. 142.)

VI

This Venezuelan incident, comparatively unimportant in itself, was important in the discussion it aroused over the possibilities involved, and in its developmental influence upon the President. The press, European as well as American, pointed out that when the United States gave its consent to the seizure of the Venezuelan ports, provided permanent occupation were not attempted, the word "permanent" went undefined. Examples were quoted from history to show that temporary occupation of a country tends to become permanent, that Egypt, for instance, is held by England to-day on no other ground than because Egypt was unable to pay her debts. This might be the fate of Latin-American republics if temporary occupation by European nations were allowed. "If there is to be any chastising of Central or South American nations after this Venezuelan episode ends," declared one editor, "it will have to be inflicted by the United States."²⁶

President Roosevelt seems to have come to the same conclusion. To allow European confiscation of the revenues of an American state is hardly reconcilable with the Monroe Doctrine. Monroe had declared that the United States could not permit European nations to oppress a Latin-American republic, or in any way control its destiny. Taking the revenue of a country even for a short time might well be termed oppression, and might involve occupation of a more or less permanent character. The President therefore developed that contribution to the interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine which has become known as the "Roosevelt Corollary." This in effect provides that in cases of dispute over financial claims of European nations against American countries, the United States shall take possession of the customs houses of the latter, and administer the revenues for the benefit of the American debtor nation as well as of the European creditors. On the other hand, while the territorial integrity of Latin-American states must be respected, they in turn are to be held strictly accountable for the payment of debts and for the protection

26. St. Louis Globe-Democrat, Dec. 6, 1902.

of European subjects. Thus, for the first time, there came to be a positive as well as a negative interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine, a duty laid upon the American republics as well as a prohibition upon Europe. This duty rested both upon the Latin-American nations and the United States.

It must be understood that the Roosevelt corollary developed gradually through a period covered approximately by the Roosevelt administrations. By reading the presidential messages and speeches during those years, one can see this broader interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine slowly taking form. During the earlier years of his administration, Mr. Roosevelt was especially emphatic in his assurances of the good faith of the United States toward the Latin-American nations. "We have not the slightest desire to secure any territory at the expense of any of our neighbors," he said in his first annual message; and a year later he declared, "No independent nation in America need have the slightest fear of aggression from the United States." After his second annual message, while still disclaiming a policy of aggrandizement under cover of the Monroe Doctrine, the president began to insist more earnestly upon the responsibilities which accompany the privileges of independent states. Thus, in the summer of 1904, reviewing the policy of his administration in supporting the rights of the weaker American republics against foreign aggression, he added that he was losing no opportunity to point out to those republics "that those who seek equity should come with clean hands, and that whoever claims liberty as a right must accept the responsibilities that go with the exercise of that right."²⁷

One might naturally ask what the consequences of a failure to recognize those responsibilities would be. The answer to this question appeared five months later in Mr. Roosevelt's fourth annual message, when he suggested that chronic wrong-doing might ultimately require intervention by other nations, and that in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine might force the

27. In his Letter of Acceptance of the Republican Nomination for President.

United States in flagrant cases "to the exercise of an international police power."²⁸ A few days later, Secretary of War Root, speaking before the New England Society of New York and speaking evidently with the approval of his chief, amplified this statement in the following way: "The declaration of the President of the United States is that what we will not permit the great powers of Europe to do on this continent, we will not permit any American republics to make it necessary for the great powers of Europe to do. The obligation of civilization to see that right and justice are done by these republics, which we protect with our strong arm against oppression by the other powers of the world, is an obligation that must always go with the right that we assert."²⁹

Thus it is clear that the "obligation" contained in the Roosevelt corollary is one resting upon the United States as well as upon the Latin-American republics; the latter must observe the responsibilities which are inseparable with independence, and the former must be the executor of civilization upon the American continent.³⁰ Mr. Root did not say, nor did President Roosevelt, how this obligation would be enforced. According to the practice of nations, a state answers for its good behavior ultimately by its territorial sovereignty, but in the case of Latin-America the territory is inviolable under the Monroe Doctrine. Therefore when world powers are told that they shall not push their remedies for wrong to the point of occupying American territory, it is the Rooseveltian inference that the United States will see that the wrong is redressed in some other way. This country must assume a certain responsibility. It must in some way supply the accountability. It does not claim sovereignty over its neighbors, but simply the right

28. "Foreign Relations," 1904, p. xli.

29. Harper's Weekly, Vol. 49, p. 528.

30. Authorities in international law years before had predicted that the trend in the interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine would lead to this end. Prof. Theodore S. Woolsey pointed out in December, 1902, apropos of the Venezuelan affair, the constant danger that this country's control over American affairs would grow to be such that it could not escape a corresponding responsibility. (Independent, Vol. 54, p. 2991.)

to interfere in their behalf against European creditors. After all, that is not far from a claim of suzerainty over all Latin-American republics, for if the United States has a right to interfere in their foreign relations they have lost some of the attributes of sovereignty.

VII

The positive implication of the Roosevelt corollary (compulsion by the United States of the strict accountability of American republics for the payment of their debts) has never been fully developed, though precedents have already occurred. Such a precedent was the financial receivership established over Santo Domingo in 1905.

The history of the national finances of that pseudo-republic is not relevant to this discussion. It is sufficient to note that by 1905, Santo Domingo, totally bankrupt, was being threatened by European creditors. Upon its own request, a treaty was concluded giving the United States control over the customs duties till the debts were paid. President Roosevelt's message to the Senate, February 7, 1905, transmitting this treaty, showed clearly how carefully he had developed his theories of the direction American foreign policy should take. The message also stated in compact form the American justification for interference with the affairs of a neighboring state.

"It has for some time been obvious", the President wrote, "that those who profit by the Monroe doctrine must accept certain responsibilities along with the rights which it confers; and that the same statement applies to those who uphold the doctrine. . . . The justification for the United States taking this burden [the financial rehabilitation of the Dominican republic] and incurring this responsibility is to be found in the fact that it is incompatible with international equity for the United States to refuse to allow other powers to take the only means at their disposal of satisfying the claims of their creditors and yet to refuse, itself, to take any such steps.

"An aggrieved nation can without interfering with the Monroe doctrine take what action it sees fit in the adjustment of its disputes with American States, provided that action does not take the shape of interference with that form of government

or of the despoilment of their territory under any disguise. But, short of this, when the question is one of money claim, the only way which remains, finally, to collect it is a blockade, or bombardment, or the seizure of the custom-houses, and this means, as has been said above, what is in effect a possession, even though only a temporary possession, of territory. The United States thus becomes a party in interest, because under the Monroe doctrine it cannot see any European power seize and permanently occupy the territory of one of these republics; and yet such seizure of territory, disguised or undisguised, may eventually offer the only way in which the power in question can collect any debts, unless there is interference on the part of the United States.”³¹

The preamble to the treaty, which described American intervention as a legitimate outcome of the Monroe Doctrine, was stricken out by the Senate, which afterwards adjourned without taking action upon the treaty itself. This was hailed by the opposition press as a deliberate refusal of the Senate to accept Mr. Roosevelt’s interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine.³²

The following August, at Lake Chautauqua, New York, the President delivered an address in which chief attention was devoted to American foreign policy. He took the ground that our traditional policy was meeting with recognition abroad because we had not allowed it to become fossilized, but had adapted our construction of it to meet the changing needs of America. If a republic to the south of us committed a tort against a foreign nation, he said, the Monroe Doctrine did not force us to interfere to prevent punishment, except to forbid territorial occupation of the offending country. As to cases involving the failure to meet contractual obligations, the United States had never enforced the demands of its own citizens by an appeal to arms. Some foreign nations had not been so considerate, but before we object to their forcible interference, we ought to try to bring about some plan by which the just obligations shall be paid. “Personally, I should always prefer to see this country step in and put through such an arrange-

31. “Foreign Relations,” 1905, p. 335.

32. Harper’s Weekly, Vol. 49, p. 528.

ment rather than let any foreign country undertake it. I do not want to see any foreign power take possession permanently or temporarily of the custom-houses of an American republic in order to enforce its obligations, and the alternative may at any time be that we shall be forced to do so ourselves." ³³

The annual message of December, 1905, gave a lengthy discussion of the Monroe Doctrine and the Santo Domingo treaty, much of which was a repetition word for word of the Chautauqua address of the previous August. On the point of European enforcement of contractual obligations it was even more specific and emphatic, and ran as follows: ". . . it is very inadvisable to permit any foreign power to take possession, even temporarily, of the custom-houses of an American Republic to enforce the payment of its obligations; for such temporary occupation might turn into a permanent occupation." ³⁴

This represents the reverse of the attitude taken by the administration in its correspondence with the German ambassador over Venezuela in 1901, and is a measure of the distance traversed in the interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine from 1901 to 1905. In the meantime a temporary executive arrangement with the Dominican republic provided for the collection of its customs under the supervision of the United States, and for the reservation of 55 per cent. of the receipts for foreign creditors. Although the United States Senate never ratified the treaty of 1905, a convention concluded February 8, 1907, provided for a continuation of the American collection of the revenues, and such collection has continued to the present day.³⁵

Doubtless this financial intervention has been welcome to the creditors of Santo Domingo, as well as to the best interests of its own government and citizens. The government receives more to-day from its 45 per cent. share of the customs than it formally received from the whole. Revolutionary movements have also been discouraged. An uprising in 1913

33. St. Louis Globe-Democrat, Aug. 12, 1905.

34. "Foreign Relations," 1905, p. xxxiv-xxxv.

35. *Ibid.*, 1907, p. 306 et seq.

was snuffed out in one month when the United States served notice on the rebels that if they did succeed in overthrowing the existing government they would not be recognized, and would not receive the Dominican share of the revenue. One might legitimately ask, however, what has become of the sovereignty and independence of the people of Santo Domingo.

VIII

The latest apparent widening of the scope of the interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine occurred in 1912. At that time a report was in circulation that Japan was attempting to gain a foothold in Magdalena Bay, off Lower California, through a Mexican concession to a Japanese company. The charge was categorically denied by the Japanese ambassador, but it gave occasion for the passage of a resolution in the Senate, July 31, 1912, as follows: "Resolved that when any harbor or other place in the American continents is so situated that the occupation thereof for naval or military purposes might threaten the communications or the safety of the United States, the government of the United States could not see without grave concern the possession of such harbor or other place by any corporation or association which has such a relation to another government, not American, as to give that government practical power or control for national purposes."³⁶ This was generally declared to be a considerable extension of the ~~Monroe~~ Doctrine. On the other hand it may more properly be regarded as simply an interpretation made to meet a condition that had never arisen before. It is the substance of the thing to which our nation holds, and that is, and always has been, that the safety of the United States demands that American territory shall remain American.

The foreign policy of President Wilson has been announced as clearly and effectively as was that of Mr. Roosevelt. As in the case of the former president, Mr. Wilson has disclaimed an aggressive attitude towards the Latin-American nations, and has explicitly declared that the United States would not again

36. American Year Book, 1912, p. 77.

seek to secure one additional foot of territory by conquest. He has seemed also to place greater emphasis upon the equality of nations. He believes that each state has the right to work out its own salvation, hence his policy of "watchful waiting" and non-intervention in Mexico. During the previous sixteen years the nation had been drifting into a policy of aggression, according to the Democratic party. Mr. Wilson ~~has~~ tried to combat that tendency. "We have seen material interests threaten constitutional liberty in America," he said. "I would rather belong to a poor nation that is free, than a rich nation that has ceased to love freedom."³⁷

At the same time, however, the Wilson administration ~~has~~ continued the American policy developed during the last few years in the Caribbean countries. It ~~has~~ carried out the Dominican financial arrangement, and in the autumn of 1914 the Dominican elections were conducted under the supervision of a commission appointed by President Wilson. Moreover, a treaty signed September 16, 1915, between the United States and Haiti, similar to the treaty with Santo Domingo, ~~now ratified~~, provides for American supervision of the Haitian finances as well as of the constabulary for maintaining order. Another treaty with Nicaragua, ~~also just ratified~~, provides for a certain amount of American influence in that republic. Since these treaties have met the approval of the Senate, the following Caribbean countries are in a measure protectorates of the United States: Cuba, Haiti, Santo Domingo, Panama, and Nicaragua. It is obvious, as President Taft said in his last annual message, December, 1912, "that the Monroe Doctrine is more vital in the neighborhood of the Panama Canal and the zone of the Caribbean than anywhere else." The process also by which hegemony is being translated into political incorporation is not proving to be a long one.

In at least one particular, Mr. Wilson ~~has taken~~ a more advanced position than any of his predecessors. He ~~has~~ set himself firmly against the revolutionary governments of po-

37. Independent, Vol. 76, p. 240.

litical adventurers, set up to serve their personal interests and ambitions. This is not a new doctrine. It is the Monroe Doctrine modernized. It expresses sympathy for republican institutions, as it did in 1823, but is manifested now in blocking dictatorships of local tyrants. As it was to our self-interest to keep Europe from despoiling Latin-America in 1823, so President Wilson sees that it is to our advantage now to prevent the petty personal ambitions of American despots from despoiling Latin-America. He believes also that this is primarily a policy of helpfulness to our neighbors. To his mind the Monroe Doctrine is no longer a policy of selfishness.³⁸

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38. See President Wilson's Annual Message of 1915.

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(In addition to the above, many references are given in the footnotes.)

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